OPEN DISCUSSION WITH CANDIDATES
Parliamentarian Nelson: “Thank you. Now it’s the time where people can go to the microphones and ask questions. Feel free to just run to the microphones now. Start by, of course, stating your name. We’ll start with you.”

Professor N’Dri Assie-Lumumba, Africana Studies: “Great to hear all of you. One of my areas of research and teaching is educational innovations. Great innovations fail often not because of the merit, but because of the way it is done.

“What we have heard and experienced here, starting with just one example, Africana Studies, the way the transfer was done, the dean of faculty at the time was asked were you aware. He said yes, in front of the senate, but I was told to keep it confidential. So how will you navigate that, when you are told keep it confidential, while you feel the senate and the faculty need to know?”

Parliamentarian Nelson: “Thank you. We’ll start with you and head our way down.”

Professor Soloway: “There’s certain things on campus we are told we cannot keep confidential. If a student approaches me or anybody on campus who’s affiliated with Cornell approaches me and says that they have been sexually assaulted, that’s something I am told I cannot keep confidential.

“Where this particular issue that you are speaking of falls within the realm of full confidentiality and lack of confidentiality will vary from matter to matter. The motivation for confidentiality has to be investigated. If the motivation for confidentiality is to slip something through, then that’s bad motivation.

“If the motivation for confidentiality is that the benefits of the institution must be met, that’s a different issue altogether. When it comes to academic issues, I can’t say why things like what you mentioned should be kept confidential. There seems to be little justification.”

Professor Wethington: “I’m sorry that happened. I really can’t add much to what Paul has already said. It seems to me that the issue is, is it appropriate to keep something confidential or not. And the approach I would think of dean of faculty will be to investigate the limits of confidentiality and sometimes to negotiate a settlement about what can be revealed and what can’t be.

“It would bother me if I felt I had been asked to keep something confidential that I thought in rights people very much had the right to know.”

Professor Lieberwitz: “Thanks, N’dri, for your question. This issue is something that I have been extremely concerned about, including of course with Africana and other kinds of measures that have been taken, and I think the broad answer to it is that we need to shift the norms.”
“In a university, the norm should be openness and transparency. That’s what we value in terms of a communal notion of how we do research. The norm should be openness.

“Over the years in my engagement in faculty governance, I have seen, I think, a very distressing shift where, for example, in the UFC, we have had administrators come to us and told us before they tell us what they are going to tell us, that we have to keep it confidential. I think we should refuse to give prior promises of confidentiality, that the burden should be on the administration to prove that something needs to be kept confidential and that we should be able to, as participants and leaders in faculty governance, to refuse to do that.

“And I think it takes courage, and I don't think it's always going to be pleasant. I certainly think talking things out and trying to avoid a conflict is better, but I think we have to commit ourselves to transparency, and then people will see that we all go on living well together with transparency.”

Professor Russell: “Thanks for the question. You really do put your finger on a really key issue there and what I expect will be one of the most difficulty aspects of dean of faculty position. I'm pretty much on the same page with the people that have spoken.

“I think the first thing is to try to avoid agreeing to confidentiality in cases where clearly there should be that involvement, and it’s because things are being kept quiet until too far in the process that we're engendering these conflicts that are, I think, unnecessary and destructive for everybody.
“So certainly, my first approach would be to try to argue that confidentiality should not apply and to avoid committing to it in cases where it is not appropriate. Obviously, there are cases where it is.”

Professor Van Loan: “I talked to the director of your center a few weeks ago, because I wanted to understand the list of the governance problems and I wanted to learn about the situation. So I think -- it's not all or nothing. You can have certain confidentiality things, but you can also talk in the abstract.

“For example, one could have, way before this happened, talked about how are Africana centers situated in different universities. How are they different? What works here and what works there? That’s out in the open. That’s why debate, it sets the stage. And then perhaps Kent Fuchs might have thought a little different about it.

“But I was saying the DOF has to be out there, beating the bushes, finding out what these problems are. And we can do this and stay ahead of the curve, so to speak.
“So again, we are all used to confidentiality like in tenure decisions. We are in a room. It's confidential, but there is a way of communicating to the candidate, and that's very important. It's not all or nothing.”

Professor Richard Miller, Department of Philosophy: “Professor van Loan referred to a worry that a number of us have, not a matter just of process, but of substance. It is the worry that the administration is pushing through measures that emphasize entrepreneurship and technology, that streamline in a way that reduces academic diversity, in a way that reduces the scope of scientific, humane and scientific inquiry at Cornell.

“I think the College of Business is a prime example. One question I have for those of you who are running for dean of faculty is whether you agree that this is a serious threat.

“The other question I have is what sort of response do you think would be most productive. Is the response a matter of simple peer review, is it a matter of our being an audience for the administration, consulting with them via two-minute sound bites? Is the right response for us to be an audience for faculty committee? “If you think the right response is for us to deliberate and express a faculty voice working out what are, no doubt, disagreements about this question, how would you take initiative to organize those deliberations?”

Professor Soloway: “So Dick, you contrasted process and substance. And of course, both are important. You can't really have one without the other effectively. Means don't justify ends. You mentioned several issues related to diversity, entrepreneurship that are surrounding some of the College of Business issues. You asked if it's a threat.

“As I stated in my own remarks, I don't think there's anything fundamentally good or bad about coalescing some of our disparate units. We have units on campus that have existed for years apart, for reasons that are somewhat arcane. I think if Ezra and Andrew came back here today, they would be simultaneously thrilled and shocked by what's here on campus. They would be thrilled by what we actually do have and shocked by the way we have organized it in some manners.

“So I think there is room for re-evaluating how we've organized ourselves. I think that we have many instances in which the sum of our parts is actually less than they could be, in part because we have built walls around units and not bridges as effectively.

“And the question is how do you build bridges while still preserving the privacy, if you will, that those walls do provide. And I don't know the answers for that. I mentioned that, for example, in determining whether there is -- if there are synergies to be developed, I don't necessarily know what they are.
“I can envision what finance, marketing and accounting would be, and so I can envision well, maybe those that teach it can find synergies, but I can't really necessarily articulate what the synergy should be among the research program.

“So for that setting, I'd say get some of the different faculty together, give them a little food, a pleasant environment, and see what comes from that. I would hope to be able to facilitate some of those discussions and then come up with some informed recommendations ideally as a body for the administration.”

Professor Wethington: “I'm in a multidisciplinary department and I'm a minority member, and there are a number of rumors whirling around my department about what our ultimate fate is going to be, what kind of synergies we are being asked to find with other departments and what the implications may be, particularly for those of us in minority disciplines, as to how much longer we're going to be at Cornell and where we are going to be serving.

“However, I kind of have a faith in the system that these disparate elements can be cultivated in existing units and allowed to flourish, rather than necessarily all merged together willy-nilly to look for synergy.

“One of my big concerns is that from the top down, there's been a judgment made about, for example, the similarity or duplication of my department to other departments, and we have had to answer a number of questions that seemed to us to be inappropriate. This is all coming -- because it is all coming from the top down.

“I would hope that moving forward, as actually the provost promised us he would do, that the departments or units that are now going to be asked to think about synergies think about how to do it on their own and to come up with their own strategies for this and that those strategies will be respected. That's what I would say.”

Professor Lieberwitz: “Dick, I think you raise lots of questions, and they are all important. I will take a stab at at least some of them. First, I believe very much that having a good process of governance will enable us to air and debate and deliberate and discuss all of these issues, and I'm always surprised -- and I don't know why I'm surprised, but I'm at least surprised and impressed by how much comes out of people sitting face-to-face or in a large room and actually discussing issues, that we have ideas emerge and we do better for it.

“And so I think that we have to insist that's a process that we use for considering things like consolidation restructuring. And that's true, regardless of which units are involved and what the particular goals are for that consolidation.

“But with regard to your particular question, I do have real concerns about the -- seems to me singular drum beat that we are hearing with regard to entrepreneurship and
business orientation of the university and how that goes hand in hand with commercialization that we have seen increase in the university, the use of Cornell Tech to bring the university closer to business, et cetera, et cetera.

“And I do have very real concerns that we're not having these broader discussions about is there a shift in the tenor as well as the substance of the university and its focus; an obvious question being where are the humanities and how do we think of the humanities, as opposed to serving the rest of us, what is the integrity of all parts of the university.”

Professor Russell: “I think as far as the concerns about reducing academic diversity and so on, I do share a concern that in trying to compete with other universities, there's too often a dependency to try to make ourselves just like them and to lose the things that make Cornell special and made it worthwhile to me to come when my particular discipline was very poorly represented when I arrived, although that's improved a whole lot.

“There's other synergies and things you don't find other places, but that certainly doesn't mean there aren't worthwhile changes and reorganizations, so I don't have a blanket answer to that, but I think it's a matter of concern.

“And in terms of how you try to deliberate about that, I mean, as dean of faculty, I think you start by trying to identify the relevant constituencies and sit down with them and try to figure out how they want to work on deliberating to work for it. I mean, you can't have everybody sitting down all together. I have to at some point come to some structured way of having discussions, but I think you start with open discussions and you try to devise those structures.”

Professor Van Loan: “First, I think it's a little too simplistic to think the entrepreneurship is somehow orthogonal to research. Entrepreneurship is related to applied research, which is connected to basic research, and there are ways of hooking those things together.

“Let me bring up an example, like with Cornell Tech, since it came up. So the proposal was floated in the summer, like August. And there was like a four-month period where things could have been discussed. I looked at the senate minutes. The November meeting was canceled.

“It seems to me that if I was a DOF at that time, I would say, why don't we talk about the connection between entrepreneurship and research? What about the possibility of having SNTS, a presence down there, or having a philosopher down there at Cornell Tech? Why not talk about that stuff?
“So in a way, when I look back, I see a lot of examples of the faculty being asleep at the wheel. I’m sorry to say that, but there’s been a real squandering of an opportunity there, for example, to heighten the level of discussion, and that meeting was canceled.”

Professor Richard Bensel, Department of Government: “So I want to pick up on Charlie’s introductory comments. In most of what we have seen in governance over the last -- at least since I have been serving in the faculty senate is a balkanization of the Cornell community into committees and into privileged consultation with affected departments, and what that undercuts is the development and cultivation of Cornell as a community.

“And the faculty senate is one of the, if not the only body that can represent the Cornell community in making decisive decisions affecting the liberal arts education and the trajectory of the university. Now, what Charlie said in his opening comments, he made some specific recommendations about how to strengthen the faculty senate and to consultation.

“I am particularly interested in asking what specific reforms, changes would you make in faculty senate governance and participation that would cultivate Cornell as a community in which we’d be offering more than just specific information and our own individuals.”

Professor Soloway: “So you raised a number of interesting points, each of which could take a minute and a half. One of the things that I often think about is who has the unheard voice. I mean, it’s easy to hear the voice that’s being spoken to me, but I know that there are lots of voices that are not shared, and oftentimes it’s that voice that has a lot of merit that needs to be tapped and addressed.

“And basically, you are asking, I perceive this, that you want to know how to get these additional voices, additional opinions, especially when they might not be the loudest ones. I think Charlie had some very clever ideas about implementing some web-based tools for securing opinions.

“I mean, within this room, votes can be taken. Ideally, this room is representative of the broader community, but not completely. You have one vote, but within your department there are many. And so the question becomes how can you ask the remaining people questions, solicit the input. There can be a lot of materials to read through, and maybe it’s ideal to have it narrowed down to tweets. If people are going to be sharing important opinions when they are not normally heard, it becomes very difficult to read reams of paper; but ideally to have terse, distilled comments that can then be discussed and elaborated upon further in a body like this, where we will hear more voices. So I think these are some strategies that can be taken advantage of to have the information from the broader community. And I’ll stop there.”
Professor Wethington: “The faculty senate is organized around the department model, and I think that has some strengths and weaknesses. Speaking as a social scientist, we often feel that we are a minority at Cornell that is relatively poorly represented, even in the faculty senate, because of the smaller number of departments and the smaller size of the departments.

“There are not many of us here. I think if we thought about the representation of different types of constituencies at Cornell, having more members at large to represent different types of constituencies that we think need some identification, some boosting for the future, that that would contribute to more involvement in the faculty senate and more involvement in governance in general.”

Professor Lieberwitz: “Yeah, Richard, thanks. I think these are all interesting ideas, and it shows how, when we actually ask these questions and then propose some possibilities for discussing changes, that that’s a positive thing.

“So I think we should never be simply tied to a structure because we have been doing it that way, and there certainly are some aspects of the senate that -- and the UFC and the committees, the standing committees that could use more attention, more evaluation, what’s working, what isn’t.

“So certainly in the senate itself, we don’t need people just giving us reports, more reading beforehand. We have been trying to do that. I think we need to do it more. That’s whether it’s from our colleagues or from administrators. The UFC, I think, needs to be more open and have minutes that everybody can read and be more responsive to the senate, a more give-and-take.

“And I think we really need to look at our standing committees and see if they are working and how can we make them more participative and active, so that people will want to work on them. And if governance works better and the administration is more responsive and there’s a better interaction there, people will want to participate more.

“And then one other thing I would add is that I think that the dean of faculty and the senate need to work on helping to strengthen governance at the college level. I think that it has been seriously weakened at the college level, and that created an unstable foundation for us at this level of the senate.”

Professor Rusell: “I agree that all we can do to get the more bureaucratic parts outside of the actual meetings and try to encourage more lively debate and discussion at the actual meetings is a good thing, and also to try and encourage people who are not faculty senators to come, which I have been a substitute senator occasionally, and actually am today.”
“But I have very frequently come to senate meetings because I was interested in issues being discussed, and I don't see very many other people doing that. I think working to encourage that and to provide perhaps forms of discussion that are more open and interactive and try to bring in more people would be a more useful use of that time.”

Professor Van Loan: “When we had the fossil fuel debate two, three years ago, Dean Burns set up a blog. That was really great; dozens and dozens of people registering their comments. I think we need more of that kind of stuff.

“Here’s an interesting sort of model. If you look at the College of Business web site -- I don't know if you have done this. Pretty sophisticated -- and there is a way for you to send in a comment to any one of these committees.

“And I had something I wanted to say, but then I contacted the person who runs the whole web site. I said why don’t you have a -- they make a big thing at the bottom, oh, your privacy a protected. Your comment will be safe with our committee. So I wrote to this person. I said: Why don't you put a little check box down there? What if I want my paragraph out there for other people to see? He said, well, great idea. So they went and talked a little bit, then he came back saying -- he gave me a list of reasons -- I think it was the head PR person, saying no. There was all kinds of convoluted reasons not to do it, but I like that web site in principle. If you had a check box, so that we could share our views. I'm a big fan of rough drafts.

“You know what I hate? I hate when a committee is working on some report, you go up to someone and say hey, what are you doing? Oh, I can't talk to you until a report's out. I want rough drafts out there, so everybody can look at them. I want to click on your name, if you are in a committee, because I know you and I want to contact you directly. I want agendas up there; not just minutes, agendas, so everyone can see what is going on. It's getting more and more complex.

“The senate is only concerned with issues that touch two colleges. Everything touches two colleges now. We don't have the time. We have to set up some kind of web-based thing where we can see what everyone is doing.”

Unidentified Speaker from Electrical and Computer Engineering: “In introspect with our reactions to the central administration, I would like to learn from you what is your speculation of the next major organization change, or ways that we can take proactive participations in that process.”

Professor Soloway: “So the next major organizational changes. Well, there are some things that I worry a little about. One is the expanding roles of non-tenure track faculty. How is that going to play out across the college? Are we going to have essentially a two-tiered system, have and have-nots? That actually is a significant concern that I
have. What will that do for the morale of the overall teaching, how does that impact on the classroom.

“I’m worried about the expansion of masters programs that we are being encouraged to participate in. These are being put forward as money-making schemes. It’s quite clear that is the objective. The money would remain where? Frequently, at least in my department, I’m told it would remain within the unit that’s founding the program.

“Well, if that’s the case, then there’s no motivation for broadening the program, to have teachers from outside it, who may actually make the program better than if it’s restricted to my own department. So I worry about these kinds of expanding programs that turn us into a diploma mill, and sometimes a lower-quality diploma mill.

“When areas of excellence are dispersed across the universities, what are the most effective ways to build those bridges that I mentioned earlier? What kind of incentives can we provide that get faculty to cross their department lines? I think the graduate school is a great embodiment of how we’d actually do that quite well. Graduate fields span departments, they span colleges.

“When I was DGS for the GGD program, we had five colleges and 15 departments represented. We had good interactions. There’s some centers around here, center for vertebrate genomics I take part of, the nanobiotechnology center. These are very useful programs that coalesce people. Tying things together in this manner, I think, is an ongoing challenge.”

Professor Wethington: “I worry about the future of undergraduate programs at Cornell. I find it sometimes very difficult to understand how all the different types of initiatives that my faculty and I are encouraged to do all fit together; a focus on online learning, which one semester becomes a focus on MOOCs, which the next semester becomes a focus on teaching prospective transfer students, and the next semester, we are then asked to accept as equivalent to face-to-face teaching.

“I find a lot of the things which are promoted in online teaching to be somewhat incompatible with things I am encouraged to do by the Center for Teaching Excellence in terms of more intense, high-touch types of interactions with our students. I’m having real trouble thinking through what the future of the university is, Cornell in particular, and how it’s going to affect my field and others.”

Professor Lieberwitz: “Thanks for that question. I want to answer it by going back to this issue of consolidation, because I think that with the sort of messages that we’ve been hearing about streamlining, about consolidating, about restructuring and looking for sort of efficiencies in certain ways, that makes me very concerned about a real shift in a model from really valuing having different disciplines, the same disciplines represented in different places in the university, having people with different views on
topics that look like a similar course; of course teaching them differently because they’re different people in different contexts.

“So I am very concerned about the issue of consolidation. And I had this image, when we were asked about overlapping courses that we had to report on, that it was sort of a supermarket model of putting all the cereal in the same aisle. And it seems to me -- nobody thought that was funny.

“It seems to me that's not the model that we should be going for. The notion is a really diverse, vibrant kind of university setting. And so if restructuring is to be considered, if consolidation is part of that, then we need to have in place a protocol that gives us expectations of how it will be handled.

“And of course, that brings us back to governance. What will be the order in which things are done, how will the senate and its committees be brought in, how will the colleges at that level be brought into the discussion early for developing ideas and rejecting ideas and following it through. And I think that can help to alleviate the stress and the anxiety that is palpable right now on campus, particularly after the College of Business.”

Professor Rusell: “Well, I wouldn't want to speculate on what the next reorganizational effort is going to be, but my guess is it will have something to do with centralization and consolidation. So that brings us back to questions of how do we maintain the academic diversity that makes Cornell what it is and that we have to offer in particular.

“One thing I would say is I fondly hope that the next one that comes down will be something that doesn't come as a flash fully formed from above, but is something we will actually hear about and participate in, although I'm not holding my breath.”

Professor Van Loan: “One of the great things about Cornell is the field system. I mean, it's strictly driven by intellectual stuff. It's not a financial thing. And I think these reorganizations, our best guard against foolish ones is to really pay attention to the field system, make sure it's working.

“I went over and talked to Dean Knuth about the College of Business. I said are there some field issues here, because I looked at Mike's list of why we're doing this, and it seemed to me that, Step 1, why don't we ask is there a field system breakdown here that we need to do this packaging.

“So I don't know what the next big thing is going to be, but I think in terms of these aggregations and cost-cutting things, I would sort of say our best defense is to pay attention to the field system, and I would say as DOF, I would pay a lot of attention to that. When you visit people, ask is the field system working for your faculty. If not, why not?”
Parliamentarian Nelson: “I think we have time for one more question.”

Professor Emerita, Ann Lemley, President CAPE: “I would like to shift the focus slightly from what really incredibly important issues that you have been discussing, and that is to the other role of the dean of the faculty, and that is working with the faculty.

“As a former department chair, as a member of quite a few appeals committees, I find that when you get on the appeals board and you’re a woman, you get picked for a lot of committees. A lot of panels, rather. And also, as kind of my crown experience at Cornell was two years on fact, shortly before I retired, which is an incredible eye-opener. Dean of faculty has to deal with so many very, very sensitive issues, and faculty members are people, and you can imagine all the things that arise.

“And so I’d like you all to perhaps turn your attention to that aspect of the position, what your background is that might help inform you on this and/or what just your fundamental philosophy is toward dealing with the rather difficult personnel issues. And you’re in a very important place when you have to do it.”

Professor Soloway: “Well, I think the essence of this position has to do with really effectively playing well with others, keeping in mind the overall interests of the enterprise.

“You asked about qualifications. Before I came to Cornell, I was working at another institution, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, and had one of the most challenging experiences that I had just a few years out of my post-doc, when one person in my lab accused another person in my lab of sexual harassment.

“I had no training in that, how to handle it. I worked my best to mitigate, and when that failed, I had to bump that upstairs to another individual and I encouraged the complainant to bring that forward to the next level. Unfortunately, the person at the next level had made a decision prior to performing an investigation, and stated this to the accused. So now, I’m in the position of having the institution at risk and, again, no training in that regard.

“I don’t know how I managed it effectively, but I think I did, and I deserved the respect of all parties involved and I think the outcome that happened was the one that should have happened. A lot of this is by the seat of one’s pants, and I think one’s temperament that one brings to the game determines one’s success. And of course, there are so many variables that cannot be predicted that influence the outcomes as well. I’m not sure I have given you an answer, because I’m not sure I really have one.”

Professor Wethington: “I think some of my most relevant experience was the work that I’ve done with the Institutional Review Board here at Cornell University, which was a
very small body when I started working with it, and now has become a very large, maybe too-intrusive body.

“Everything having to do with the Institutional Review Board must be kept confidential; but at the same time, you have to communicate with the investigator, who may be contesting a decision, with other investigators who are concerned about whether or not something that they are proposing will fly through the IRB, and working as well with members of the IRB, who often have to be reminded about the duties of confidentiality and principles of fairness and putting aside one's own interests.

“And I believe I did that job actually very well and left a good legacy on the Institutional Review Board here, and all by the seat of my pants.”

Professor Lieberwitz: “Well, I have a lot of training in labor relations, since that's my specialty. And my area is law, and particularly labor and employment law, which absolutely is a fascinating area, and I have never tired of how interesting it is.

“I also come from sort of a school of thought that law and society, so that I see law in its social structure. And that really fits well with labor and employment law, because we see the workplace as a place of social relations and the way in which we have times where we get along well, and sometimes we don't get along well and we have labor conflict. And sometimes the conflict's collective and sometimes it's individual.

“And I agree, Ann, that the role of the dean of faculty is, in addition to what we've already talked about with governance, very importantly dealing with individuals who have issues, problems, questions. And that, as a labor and employment lawyer, as well as somebody who teaches in the area, as well as working with the AAUP, this is something that I value very highly and that I think I'm quite good at.

“I like to represent people's interests, I like to advocate for them and I like to help them. And a lot of times, that's a way to find alternatives to conflicts that exist, finding ways where people can actually resolve problems before they become intractable issues and polarizing situations.

“So I think if we had clear -- if we work on clarifying the policies and the rights that exist in the university through our written policies, that's something we should work on to help avoid some of the conflicts that exist because of ambiguities in those areas.”

Professor Russell: “I want to thank Ann for drawing us to this difficult, but important aspect of the role of the dean of faculty. I think my most relevant experience, as chair of Anthropology and also as DGS, where I unfortunately had to deal with a number of disputes and difficult situations.
“And I think in their various stages and various situations, it starts with trying to inform people of the rules, the resources that are available to them, their options as fully as possible, listening to people, and then ultimately being sure that everybody feels that they are getting fair treatment in the process and hopefully eventually coming to a resolution.”

Professor Van Loan: “Just to pick up on that, so there’s nothing like being a department chair to deal with people problems. So I was chair for seven consecutive years, 35 faculty, big operation. I was DGS for five years. 100 Ph.D. students, a big operation. Currently I’m the director of the master’s program, 100 students.

“When I did the DUS for eight years back in the ’90s, we had 400 majors, so that’s where you learn to navigate these kind of complex waters in an academic setting, but I know there’s more than that with this job.

“And I went to talk to Bob Buhrman, who is the director of -- vice provost for research, because I know that he has to deal with issues about research integrity and whatever. And most of them do involve the dean of faculty as well. So I have a sense of the people problems that are associated with this job. I think all my experience back there in Computer Science prepares me for all that.”

Parliamentarian Nelson: “Do we have time for one more question?”

Speaker Lewenstein: “If we end now, we will have time for about five minutes of general discussion, or we can have one more question and response. Anybody have strong opinions? I know there were a couple people who still had questions.

“Let’s go with questions.”
Parliamentarian Nelson: “We really do have time for one more question now. Is there anybody that has a question? Yes.”

Professor Vicki Meyers-Wallen: “This is actually a pretty simple question. Vicki Meyers-Wallen, Biomedical Sciences. It seems trivial, but to me, it’s not. I have been in the faculty senate and a faculty senator for many years. As I sat here at this meeting, I noticed some changes in how things are done.

“And the one I’m most concerned about is we have much less time for discussion, a lot more time for administrators to give us 15-, 20-minute presentations, which could have been in an e-mail or a web site. And I personally would like to see more information and discussion coming from this body that makes this a really vibrant, active part of faculty governance.

“So my question to you all is could you give me an example of how you would arrange the faculty senate agenda, meeting, so we could really participate in the process.”
Professor Soloway: “Well, the agenda’s one way to foster communication. There are other ways that actually came up in some of our earlier discussion about trying to hear the unheard voices, and I think all of these issues are very useful.

“Yes, you’re right. We hear presentations that actually could be distributed as e-mails, and sometimes they were subsequently posted as presentations and we could have looked through them and there wasn't really much that was missed after having heard the discussion and having viewed the online document.

“So I fully agree with you. I’d rather hear more voices than fewer, and I’d rather hear -- as a faculty body, of course we need to hear from our administrators, but they need to hear from us as well, obviously, and it’s mechanisms like these, some of those we have already discussed earlier that are very effective, ideally, in sharing these different voices.”

Professor Wethington: “I think one way to promote more discussion is to have the discussion of a particular issue over multiple meetings, rather than just one, like setting aside half an hour for the discussion of a document, not actually needing to -- not requiring the vote at that time, to go back and get more input from people in our departments, from other constituencies that we feel we may represent and bring them back for discussion.

“I think another way to promote discussion is for those who are members of the faculty senate to bring issues forward to the University Faculty Committee, particularly those that are of particular interest to your department, but have broader interests, and ask to have them considered and discussed. So more participation really, more talk.”

Professor Lieberwitz: “I agree with everything that was just said. So I’d just add a couple of things. There’s always a difficulty in setting an agenda between having lots of issues that are important to talk about and being able to have enough time to talk about any single issue that’s on an agenda. So certainly I think, as Elaine said, having more than one meeting and recognizing there are many questions that do not need to be decided at one meeting is very important.

“And I think that links very much with what I was talking about earlier with regard to protocols and expectations of how governance will take place, because one of the problems that we've been under in the senate is a sense of having to rush when the administration presents us with an almost final proposal or almost final plan, and then we’re always rushing to try to get the faculty senate’s voice in.

“So I think if we improve that situation and we have a protocol in place for different kinds of decision-making, then we can have those extended discussions that we know
will then be picked up at another time, and we don't have to feel pressured under kind of artificial deadlines being imposed on us. And of course, more debate is better.

“I’d also like to work on making sure people feel comfortable in disagreeing with each other. I’ve noticed over some years that people are afraid to speak out, and that kind of fear engenders more fear and hesitancy, so I think we have to get in the habit of recognizing how good it is when we get up and agree and disagree with each other.”

Professor Russell: “Yeah, I agree pretty much with everything that’s been said. So I guess what I’d add is that I find personally that usually the presentations from administrators, and sometimes committees as well, are not very interesting and usually just repeat things that are available elsewhere.

“What I find much more valuable, but unfortunately is much more rare, is when there’s just open question and answer sessions with the president, provost and so on. And I would like to see more of that and less report.”

Professor Van Loan: “In my statement, I say we have to flip the senate; that is to say the ratio of PowerPoint to discussion, instead of being 5 to 1 that way, should be 5 to 1 the other way. So I think we all agree on that.

“The UFC does have this mission or responsibility of setting the agenda. And again, I think we need to, before the UFC meets, all of you should see what that agenda is. If you have something to say, if you think there’s something we are overlooking that should be on the agenda, you should tell us. So we need tools to make that easy.

“What we often forget is how little time faculty have, how absolutely little time they have. We have to make things easy, and I think if we do that, the quality of senate meetings can be greatly uplifted.”

Parliamentarian Nelson: “Let’s hear it for the candidates.”